



THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER is a monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc, Box 4476 GPO Sydney 2001. To advertise in this magazine, please contact the Business Manager.

Editor: George Mawer
42 Lincoln Road Georges Hall 2198
Telephone 707 1343

Business Manager: Jan Roberts
5 Sharland Av Chatswood 2067
Telephone 411 5517 (H) 9925 4000 (B)

Production Manager: Fran Holland
Editorial Team: George Mawer, Jan Roberts
& Barbara Bruce.

Printers: Kenn Clacher, Tom Wenman,
Barrie Murdoch, Margaret Niven
& Les Powell

Clubroom Reporter: Jan Roberts

THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS INCORPORATED was founded in 1927. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening at 8 pm at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milsons Point Railway Station). Visitors and prospective members are welcome any Wednesday.

President: Tony Holgate
Vice-President: Peter Miller
Public Officer: Fran Holland
Treasurer: Greta James
Secretary: Michele Powell
Walks Secretary: Eddy Giacomel
Social Secretary: Jan Roberts
Membership Secretary: Barry Wallace
New Members Secretary: Miriam Kirwan
Conservation Secretary: Alex Colley
Magazine Editor: George Mawer
Committee Members: Morie Ward &
Janet Trevor-Roberts
Delegates to Confederation: Ken Smith
& Wilf Hilder, Jim Callaway

APRIL 1996

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The Last Abseils of Summer

David Trinder

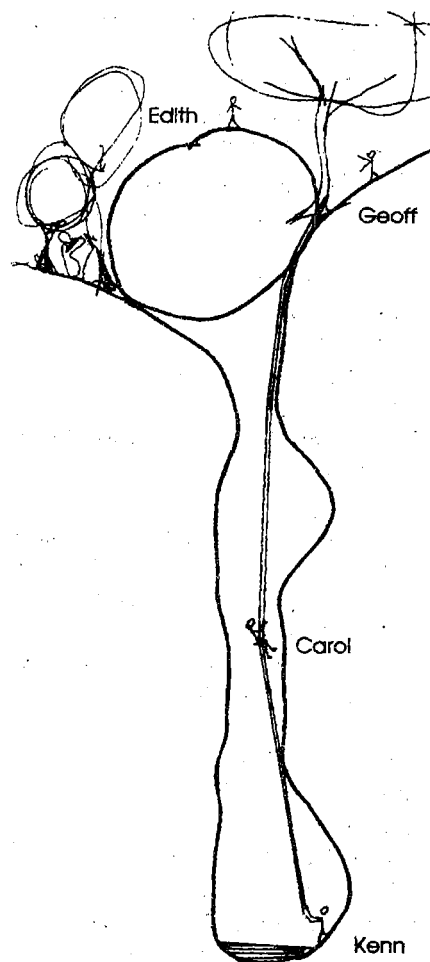
On the 24th and 25th February Kenn Clacher took a party of nine into the Wollangambe Wilderness to explore two canyons, both of which were to involve abseiling. He went out along the Glow Worm Tunnel Road, turned right on to some narrow, car width tracks, past Galah Mountain and onto the bottom left hand corner of the Mount Morgan map where he found a clear spot large enough to park the four cars. He then walked his group a few hundred metres through thick bush to a small tributary of Rocky Creek. They climbed, waded, and scrambled down this heavily vegetated creek until it mysteriously dropped into a canyon thirty five metres deep.

Kenn set up a sling and ropes to a large tree growing on a chock stone over the canyon. The sight downwards to the creek bed below was heart stopping, this was "Heart Attack Canyon". When you get your device attached to the ropes you're probably thinking, "I don't want to do this". When you reverse over the edge your subconscious is saying, "You're mad, don't go, you'll kill yourself over such a large drop" and the thinking half of your brain is saying, "Ignore him, don't look down, just look at the strong tree, the sling, the rope, and your friction device / harness system and have confidence because Kenn went down OK and you have been over similar drops before, anyway". The rejection of the subconscious is difficult and it causes anxiety and a high heart rate.

You back over the edge and walk down a vertical rock face, it's slippery, mossy and has patches of ferns. Half way down

you can now bear to look down and by then it is exciting, it's getting dark, "there is still a long way to go, and I will be landing into a pool of water". Fear has gone and you've got it under control, you jump off the rock, slide down a few metres and back on, this is fun, for the last few metres you jump away from the wall and slide down to avoid the black pool and land on dry sand, you're elated, unhook and wait for the others.

The canyon is eerie, light comes from only one place, the narrow slot above. It grazes fine moss growing on the rock faces and lights it with green and shines through fern fronds and lights them with the same green.



Heart Attack Canyon

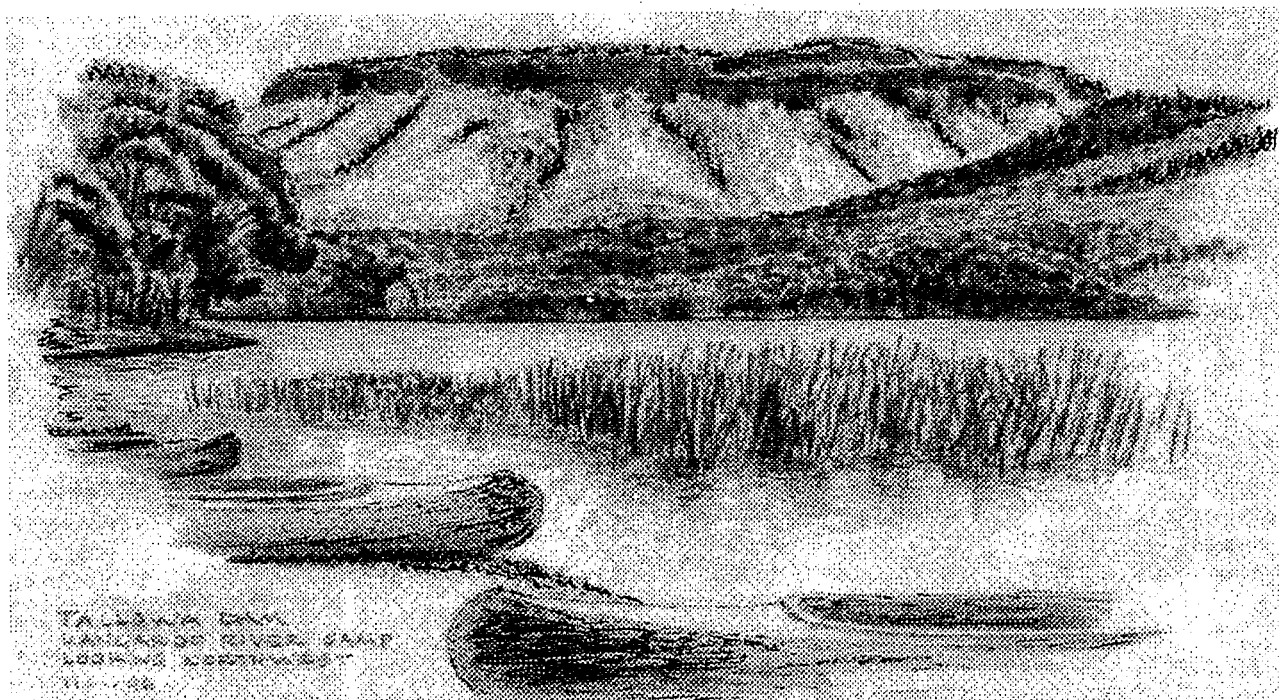
TALLOWA DAM TRIP 12-13 January 1996*By Peter Dalton*

Paddle on though shoulders ache,
The body knows nothing of the mind's blissful dream,
A weekend wallowing in jokes, sun, and swift sleep.

Canoes plod on one used to wind's swift push,
But the plodding eye can see,
Water, cliffs and trees,
A hundred sketches rustle the fingers of the mind.

Canoes are still on dawn's glassy pond.
The wind's birth can be seen
When water mirrors the sky.
The world is crystal space,
In the slide of paddle across dawn's ethereal plane.
Is this water?
No,
Tis pure light I wander through.

Magic in an ache.
Work wets us up.
Two days to five gets it wrong.
I'd paddle five,
Then muscles would fill with light,
As mind's memory paddles still.



A Reply To

• **"Wilderness Visions"** by *Bill Holland*

Maurice Smith's lecture to those members who voted against supporting the Confederations Grose Valley Wilderness proposal was surprising in both language and content. Although he was absent from the meeting Maurice dismissed arguments put to the meeting as "vague" and "lacking in political courage". As a relatively new member he readily turns to the club's 70 year history to attack present members, some of whom have experienced the past and played a part in confronting the major issues of those early days.

The Club has decided to review this matter. It now appears that the information available to the meeting was incomplete. The additional details contained in the February 1996 issue of the Confederations Magazine "The Bushwalker" may persuade members to offer support. However Maurice should at least hear some of the reasoning for the negative vote at the December meeting.

The nominations for wilderness areas, currently under consideration by the Carr government, were based on the Colong Foundation's "Red Book Index of Wilderness Areas". This very worthwhile publication was actively supported by present members of SBW. The booklet provided a sound basis for declaring up to 42 areas as suitable for wilderness declaration. The Grose Valley was not included in this list.

To his credit, Bob Carr has accepted many of the areas nominated and announcements are expected this month. This has not been without difficulties and strong opposition from both within and outside his government. Those opposing wilderness areas argue that restricting access closes off areas to ordinary people and that conservationists are being too greedy. They would welcome a claim being made on areas adjacent to Blackheath, Bell etc. as a typical example of "Greenie Greed". The meeting felt that it would be better to have existing proposals accepted before offering more ammunition to those who are set on persuading Bob Carr to change his mind.

Popular roads and tracks in the upper catchment areas have to be closed to meet the requirements for wilderness declaration, including Mount Banks road (1km) Mt Hay road (9.5kms) Faulconbridge Point road (7kms) Burra moko Road (4.5kms) These roads lead to popular lookout areas with a great deal of public use. This action may set local mountain communities, and the general public, against conservation and wilderness issues.

The approach appears to be inconsistent. Victoria Falls, Govetts Gorge and Rodrigues Pass to Acacia Flat are excluded from the wilderness proposal but other popular access areas and roads are included.

Access along cliff tops would be walking trails only. Fire trails in the catchment areas will not be available for fire hazard reduction. Personally I think this would be a good thing but there are many who will see this as a risk to extensive settlements surrounding the proposed area.

The Grose Valley is part of The Blue Mountains National Park and is already protected to a great degree. There is a management plan and action is already being taken to eradicate weeds and feral animals. Redundant fire trails are closed and will be revegetated.

More needs to be done and this can be achieved by working within the existing management plan and seeking further extensions to the Blue Mountains national Park. Above all we need public support and cooperation. It would be far better to gain this support in strengthening National Park operations than further antagonise at least a proportion of the public and provide an excuse for political backtracking.

Maurice, your intentions were good but your letter intemperate. As in the past, SBW will continue to actively support conservation and wilderness issues. We will at times disagree on the extent and direction of matters pursued by Confederation. When this happens we will accept your criticism but I hope that it will better expressed and refrain from emotive denigrating comparisons with this club's past achievements. □

The Grose River Catchment

* * Is It Degraded?

by *Jim Brown*

Maurice Smith's letter, published in the March issue of the magazine, drew attention (rather forcefully) to a disagreement between our Club and the Confederation of Bushwalking over the Confederation's nomination of the Grose River Catchment as a "Wilderness Area". Apparently the December meeting of the Club was persuaded that the Grose River valley is now too "degraded" to measure up to the desired standard for acceptance as "Wilderness".

I have to concede that the Grose River Catchment has suffered in the past from human interference - hardly surprising considering the growth of the many Blue Mountains towns along the main east west ridge from Emu plains to Mount Victoria, the way they have sprawled onto ridges leading to the north, and their effluents which have often been leaked into tributary streams leading to the Grose.

In the early days I had a particular incentive to take an interest into the well-being of the Grose River. From 1949 until 1965, when much of the Grose catchment was absorbed into the Blue Mountains National Park, under the control of the newly created National Parks and Wildlife Service, I was one of the trustees of the Blue Gum Forest. This induced me to undertake some quite crazy exploratory walks (often solo) into several of the tributary streams, both above and below the forest itself. In the course of these rambles I was frequently impressed by some of the secluded pockets of bushland - some of them miniature rain forests.

It is now 12 to 15 years since I last managed to revisit some of these gracious places, but during the time I knew them they did not seem to be subject to much degradation, and with NPWLS in control I would hope they have been preserved much as I had the good fortune to know them.

It came as something of a shock to find the Club was prepared to consider the region as a whole as unfit to qualify for the top level preservation label of "wilderness". Though damaged in places, I believe the Grose River Catchment still has a huge amount

of merit, some superb cliff-line scenery, and a great expanse of fine walking country.

I note from yesterdays newspapers (SMH April 3rd) that the state government has declared 9 additional "wilderness" areas, with a total of over 350,000 hectares of treasured bushland. They do not include the Grose River area, and probably the newly preserved regions have a stronger claim for inclusion. But that is not entirely the point I wonder if those Club members who voted to oppose Confederation's recommendation of the Grose River Catchment are really qualified to judge. Do they have detailed knowledge of the valley including its secluded and very attractive side gulleys? If they don't have this experience and expertise, perhaps they should NOT have cast their voted without knowing what they were doing.

Jim Brown.

4th April 1996. □

Magazine Contributions

Sorry to have to keep reminding you people but we're always needing items for the magazine. Why not tell us about when you got lost or benighted. Trip stories are always needed so it would help if leaders were to encourage someone on their walk to write it up. Ask the question (loudly): "Who is going to write up the walk" I would like to see some articles that have the potential to generate debate.

If you think you might like to write up the story of a coming walk, take a small note book and pencil, keep them handy and make brief notes about the things that you think you might use in your story. This will add to your enjoyment of the walk because you will automatically be more aware.

We often receive items for the magazine that have been produced on a PC, but no diskette. If you can save it onto a diskette in 'WORDPERFECT' or 'WORD' or anything that's IBM compatible, and send the disk we won't have to retype it. Please use a simple full page format with standard margins and without hard page breaks. We normally re-format it to suit our page layout and fit somewhere for printing. This will really help. If yours is handwritten or typed it doesn't matter, we still need it.

Thanks. Ed

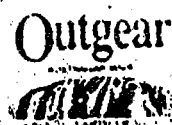


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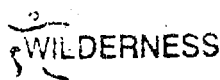


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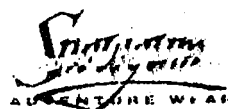
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Volleyology

More pedestrian revelations

by Len Hainke

It seems that the last word is yet to be written on this long running pedantic, as my previous commiserations might suggest. Out of the funeral pyre rises a fledgling star showing fancy footwork and a clean pair of heels to the opposition (was there any?)

'Fifteen love'

Feeling miserable at the end of my 30 year love affair, I slunked around disposal stores, shoe barns and camping shops in Nowra last Saturday. I flatfootedly approached a sales person. Did they have any old volleys? "What do you mean 'old' Volleys!!!" (I could see that I'd put my foot in it straight away)!! Volleys have been hard to get since before Xmas. "How about some Reeboks Sir?" (Groan, I mumble!). At the other end of the shop a voice cried out "Mavis, we have new stocks at the other end of the racks". Here you are, size 10.

'Foot fault'

I nervously unwrapped a pair and they immediately felt different with no revolting odour to assault my olfactories. My pulse quickened, instep arched and my toes twitched.

'Thirty love'

These were not the ordinary Xmas disasters as previously reported. My hands were trembling as I undid the laces. I thought ... Steady Lenny ... Don't get carried (pedalled) away; remember fools rush in where angels fear to tread!

'Thirty fifteen'

They are light weight at 750g a pair. The sole feels stronger and inners are tougher. They are made in China, and are totally different.

'Forty fifteen'

Cost is \$24.95 and I have just walked my 'new love' around the pad, with thick socks on (not my usual thin cotton) as they are definitely wider inside. They feel good.

'Game ... one love'

This was great news for my inner spirit, as I was beginning to feel half hearted (Half volley-ed) about getting suitable replacements. The truth is, it is a new Volley, OK, with the same tread, (wider), extra width inside and more roof room to wriggle my previously, constricted toes. The toecap rubber is deeper and wider (to boot) and the side rubber runs a

little higher. With the stronger lower heel fabric and firmer top cushion rim, this vital area is well catered for. Achilles will be pleased.

At the risk of going in there boots and all and praising the shoe up to the heel(t), it will only be after a full public (w)earing under bushwalking conditions will findings be established on the basis of a firm footing.

Other improvements include slightly longer lacing side flaps to spread the 'hugability' around the instep better and in combination with the firmer heel, reduces the tendency to walk out of the shoe in sticky mud. The toecap extra room and the better shape means my toes fill it fuller, the foot effectively moves forward. This may equate a 1/2 size smaller being called for. My little toe is almost covered by the wider toecap but I expect I will resort to my old trick of cutting this toenail short to prevent nail scuffing inside which, in combination with extra strain from squatting around campfires etc., wears a hole; hence the familiar 'piggy out hole' of Volley users.

The inners are a two wafer affair providing toughness and comfort. They seem to do a good job of insulating the foot pad from rough track conditions. Overall the foot feels very comfortable inside them and I am quite excited with my 'new love'.

'Game and set'

Footnote:

1. Traditional 'Volleyers' should do their own evaluation and, if satisfied, stash some away. Who knows how long they will be around.
2. Others who have tried them before and have found them to be too narrow could be in for a pleasant surprise.
3. No! I not work for China Foot Factory, thank you. □

Len tells me that the new Dunlop Volleys can be identified by the following -

1. They are made in China. The previous shoe was made in the Philippines.
2. The rubber toe cap is quite big. About 9mm higher than the old version.
3. When trying them for fit it is noticable that they are now wider and high enough not to have to select a size too long. (and they don't shrink) Ed

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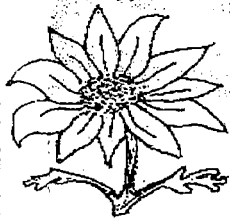
By Jan Roberts

BBQ Welcome To The New Committee - March 20

The elections over for another year, SBW members and prospectives gathered together to meet the new club committee and share a glass of wine or two. After all the unpredictable weather of summer, we were treated to a lovely clear mild autumn evening, during which we cooked our favorite BBQ treats and swapped 'walk talk'.

Alex Colley bestowed the Presidential Bones carved by Harry Savage in 1939 upon Tony Holgate, our new President, with the following words traditionally spoken by the Clubs' past Presidents at the annual reunion:

"Here is the Boot to show that the Club was formed to amalgamate those who esteem walking as a means of recreation..... Here is the map to indicate that the Club is always striving to be an institution of mutual aid in regard to routes, and ways and means of appreciating the great outdoors.....



And now the Flannel Flower, the badge of the Club, which signifies that we strive to establish a definite regard for the welfare and preservation

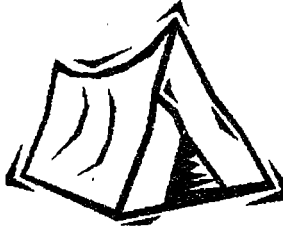
of the wild life and natural beauty of this country, and to help others appreciate these natural gifts..... And here are the Clasp'd Hands to symbolise that we try to promote social activity amongst members."

For many of us who have not been able to attend Coolana for the reunion, it was interesting to see the Bones presented and witness some SBW history. Five past Presidents joined us for the evening and were duly photographed for the archives.

We ate and drank very well, and even managed dessert, with Tom Wenman providing the last of his 60th Birthday chocolate mud cake, nicely thawed out from the week before.

South African Camping Adventures - March 27

Elwyn Morris took us on an interesting sojourn to visit many of the highlights travel in South Africa has to offer. First port of call was Cape Town with its' wonderful ocean vistas of the east coast and abundant wildflowers.



Kruger National Park featured prominently in Elwyn's slide presentation, as did the many useful hints to those planning a trip to the most southern part of the continent. In particular, we discovered the caravan parks of South Africa provided some of the best camping facilities in the world.

Wildlife was not forgotten of course, and Elwyn treated us to many of the region's famous birds and animals, captured on film.

Thank you for a very entertaining evening Elwyn, and thanks also to George, who not only starred in the slide presentation, but also managed to swap projector cartridges in the dark without a fumble.

Clubroom Program Change - April 24

Please note on your April program that the 'Food to Walk On' night scheduled to take place at the Clubroom on April the 24th, has been moved to July 24th, 1996 on the Winter Social Program.

The Social Secretary did not realise (until too late!) that many SBW members and prospectives would be walking over the Anzac extended weekend, and would therefore not be able to take part in the bake-off competition.

Instead, those going to the Clubroom on the 24th of April are invited to take along a bottle of wine and their favorite walking prints to share with the others opting to stay in Sydney.

Also; the Mapping Instructional video will be shown at 8.00pm for those interested in improving their navigation skills. □

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Highlights of the Kimberley

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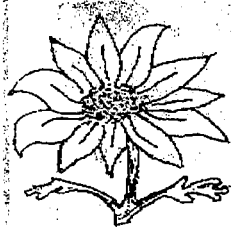
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Down the Barrington River

Two walks - -

Most of us have experienced using a guide book when visiting a new area and gaining the impression that the author had never been there and must have obtained his/her information by plagiarising another author who had probably obtained their information the same way.

Similar problems can be encountered under local conditions when a magazine description of a walk into country unfamiliar to the reader is used as a guide without the reader knowing the abilities and approach of the participants

The following two articles, reprinted from the 1969 Bushwalker, contain a salutary lesson for such readers.

submitted by *Ray Hookway*

Bushies in Barrington

by Margaret Wyborn

(Reprinted from Feb. 1969 Bushwalker)

Who has been down the Barrington river before? What a new and exciting trip for a long weekend! On our way home after the trip, walking to the car along the road, a farmer picked us up and told us of 2 young chaps who had been down the river 20 years previously. He knew of no one since.

The river falls 3,600 feet in 7 miles. There must be some waterfalls around but at the last minute abseiling ropes were not taken.

There were only 5 on our trip - Dot Butler, Gerry Sinzig, Norman Butler, Ross Wyborn and myself. We picked a beaut campspot very early on Saturday morning. It was near a bubbling creek and under some Scribbly Gums on private property, as we later found out. Early next morning we were rudely awakened by an Irate farmer, (except for myself, who only saw him disappearing into the gathering light), who remonstrated with us for parking our car in front of a gate which was next to a grid. We apologised as we did not realise that it was a gate at 2am.

Breakfast was munched 10 miles further along the road on the Kerripit river where our trip was due to start. It looked like very wealthy grazing country there, even in the drought, but gum trees were scarce.

The actual trip started off by a most refreshing swim in an eel-infested pool in the Kerripit river - a good beginning. For a mile we walked through grazing paddocks in the hot midday sun until they merged into dense rainforest vegetation which one would find along all creeks and rivers in this area. We plodded after Dot who was following a cow pad which sidled high above the river through thick vegetation.

Ross "this is silly! we should be on the creek not 500 ft above it!"

"Maybe the cows know where they are going", someone assisted.

We came down to the creek (cutting off a bend) and immediately came upon a 4ft. deep pool. We dropped our packs and jumped in, the water was surprisingly warm.

Here the Kerripit river is like the lower Kanangra river but overhung with vines, mosses and orchids hanging from trees. As we rock-hopped onwards the river started to steepen slightly with cascades on every bend. The swimming was tremendous. Ross had another try at his dam building at one of the cascades but he was quite unsuccessful in creating a small slippery dip with water.

Single clouds started drifting overhead, making us wonder what we were going to do without a tent. "Be prepared" is the Boy Scouts motto but ground sheets can easily be erected into a shelter and overhanging rocks (or bivvy rocks) can also be camped under.

For lunch we stopped above a 15ft drop in the river below which was a swimming pool. Norm our tree climber, rushed up to the scrubby tree tops, traversing from one tree top to another using thick vines as ropes. Ross also felt energetic. He followed Norm on to the first tree. CRASH! It was too much. The second tree also gave way.

Clouds changed from milky white to grey. Mist appeared and slowly but surely it started drizzling. Waterfalls 20-40ft. loomed ahead making for an interesting scramble.

We couldn't get much wetter as our swimming togs were still wet from the last swim and it was pleasant to feel the rain splashing in our faces after the hot weeks in the city.

Rocks slippery and wet slowed our progress considerably. We clambered up and around 3 or 4 waterfalls about 30 ft high and camped where the creek levelled out.

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◁ At 3600ft it was rather cold for a summer afternoon. A huge fire was lit, a feed cooked, and off to our fleabags.

Ross built a shelter under some trees using long dead branches criss-crossing each other and covering the structure with a plastic ground sheet. It was a good substitute for a stuffy old tent.

The next day was clear and we walked up the river until it was feasible to climb a ridge to reach the fire trail to Carey's Peak. Small trees and lawyer vines made way to a tall forest of eucalypts at least 100ft tall and up to 8ft in diameter. Scratchings of Lyre birds or Brush Turkeys were seen. This area should be in the proposed Barrington National Park. Lawyer vines may have tripped us up but it was little noticed as we felt so small amongst such giants.

The change in vegetation was interesting, from tall eucalyptus forest the trees gradually became smaller as we climbed until at about 4500ft. stunted Blue gums and "Snow Grass" remained.

After 5 miles of road bashing and lots of sweat we stopped for a snack in the middle of the fire-trail at a junction. Five minutes later a Land Rover, which had driven up from Barrington guest house carrying campers, nearly ran us over.

Some minutes later we met two other jeeps full of housewifely tourists - a real highway. We trotted off to Carey's Peak (five minutes from the road), and were rewarded with a hazy view of creeks and ridges from the top. Other creeks viewed from the Peak looked most interesting and jungley and the ridges looked reasonable going. Meeting another handful of tourists we immediately left for the peace and quiet of the Barrington river.

Encircling a large swamp after walking along another fire trail a mile, we started scrub bashing down a tiny creek. Prickly undergrowth and lawyer vines were abundant until we reached the Barrington River which was quite large, even high in its headwaters. On our way we saved a trout (8" long) from certain dehydration in a tiny pool. Half an hour later, after a hot lunch, we reached a swimming pool - the ideal lunch spot! What mismanagement!

Strangers in the camp - two trout fishermen were sighted. They had caught 3 but they were only 8" long. We could not make out how they had reached the river apparently only walking a short distance? Before we reached a third fisherman, Gerry, Norm and I bombed another two pools from 40ft. and

20ft. up. I hoped we scared the trout as they looked a bit undersized to me.

We camped a couple of miles downstream where the river seemed to disappear into a gorge between gigantic boulders. It was very misty that night, luckily Dot discovered some overhanging rocks quite big enough for 5 but some may have got wet if it rained too hard so a second overhang was found.

After our monstrous meals we took leave of the hot fire and cold rain for our warm sleeping bags. The roar from an 80ft. waterfall 50 yards away drowsed us off into deep sleep. Dot told us next morning that Gerry had suddenly sat up in his fleabag during the night and looking at apparent lights across the river shouted, "Who's that?" - no reply. Dot tried to look out of her sleepy eyes and but saw only glow worms between the rocks.

"Look at that" Gerry exclaimed, "what is it?"

Dot explained to us that the whole river valley was mistily lit up by the moon trying to pierce through a bank of clouds. It looked quite eerie.

The next morning the two corners of my sleeping bag were soaked but were none the worse for it. After Brekky we clambered around the side of a tree-covered cliff face to get down and around the waterfall. In actual fact it was a long slippery dip, 60ft. long at 60° and with a boulder at the end to stop you just in case you went too fast.

For the next 2 miles the going was slow. Huge house-size boulders and small waterfalls which had to be scrambled around. Very similar to Bungonia block-up except that it was very slippery in the drizzling rain. Logs were not to be trusted. "Will I slip or won't I?" "Is that green slippery growth on the rock or is it a green rock?" Three of the party took off their sandshoes and claimed a better grip on the rocks.

"At least you know when you're slipping." Gerry stated.

Dot's deciding factor was when she nearly took a sixer down a slippery log over a rocky pool. We tried to race down, around, and over the boulders but high speed was not maintained.

Along the river vines draped their greenery over the trees. Orchids grew in abundance, although not in flower.

As we descended the Barrington mist rose above us, rocks dried up and the valley widened considerably. ▷

◁ Water-boatman beetles entertained us during our lunch next to a long deep pool. We went on, the ridges covered with tree ferns and tall eucalypts slowly opened out and then suddenly we burst into the open paddocks.

We could now look back again being reminded of New Zealand. Heavily vegetated ridges hiding their mysterious tops in the forever overhanging mist and rain.

Up the Bleeding Barrington

by Russ Derbridge

(Reprinted from June 1969 Bushwalker)

In this year's February issue of the SBW a trip to Barrington Tops is described. Had I not read that article I would not have got myself into this mess. From the description it sounds like a Sunday picnic. I was deceived and I just want to put the record straight. I live in Taree, about 80 miles from the Tops so over Easter I decided to reconnoitre the area to lead a future trip. What I thought would be two quiet days turned into the four most grinding, perishing days on record. By the end of the second day I had run out of food, my strength on the third. On the fourth I thought my sanity would go.

The Nine Mile spur between the Kholwha and the Barrington rivers (the B.) slowly climbs to the tops. The use of this track goes back a long way because I found two stone implements indicating that the trail was known to the Aborigines. It takes a full day to climb that spur. The second day I took very casually. I went looking for a wartime airstrip by Land Rover with members of the Newcastle Aero club. They ran into me on the Tops. About Midday I headed down the B. having spent another hour with a party of trout fishermen round the Big Hole. I thought half a day would be ample time to get down. I never thought that I'd be following that river for a further two days!

The Big Hole is a splendid camping spot on the B. which can be reached by road. With the trout season nearly over there were few people about however.

On the afternoon of the third day I had enough of rock-hopping. Hoping for a quicker way out I climbed 1500 steep feet to the top of a ridge. It went the wrong way. I slept there and wisely headed back down at sunup. I was short of water anyway. On this trip I committed three bushwalking blunders. I went

alone, without a map, and without sufficient food to cover emergencies. With a contour map I would not have pointlessly climbed that spur. At this stage I hadn't eaten for 20 hours so I started taking an interest in what the bush had to offer. Raspberries and wild cherries were surprisingly common. I saw some little white berries in some "roo poo". I found a tree heavily laden with the same little white berries so I ate heartily reasoning that if 'roos can eat them so could I. A short time later I found a dead Kangaroo - most interesting. But I looked up and this voice spoke to me and saith I was not to perish in that place for he hath gotten other things planned for me besides crazy bushwalking. That's my story anyway. For a dollar or two I'll change it. On the fourth day when finally I dragged myself clear of the tangled forest and ceaseless rattle of water into flat fields I wept. I really did. With two full days of rock hobbling behind me, green pasture and cow dung never smelt so sweet. I was just so mighty pleased to be out. That river had become a monstrous and determined opponent baulking and snarling me with every step. I didn't want to see another waterfall again. When you're buggered, misty spray, twittering birds and cascading waterfalls lose all of that beauty they are supposed to have. OK it's a fine river but get this straight: Fair weather or foul, trout or no trout you'll never get me up the bleeding Barrington again!! □

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED

Why isn't phonetic spelt the way it sounds?

Why are there interstate highways in Tasmania?

Why are there flotation devices under plane seats instead of parachutes?

Why are cigarettes sold in petrol stations when smoking is prohibited there?

Have you ever imagined a world with no hypothetical situations?

If 7-11 is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, why are there locks on the doors?

If nothing ever sticks to TEFLON, how do they make TEFLON stick to the pan?

If you tied buttered toast to the back of a cat and dropped it from a height, what would happen? □

The 1996 Annual General Meeting.

The night was warm and humid. The assembled multitude of some 40 to 60 souls simmered gently in the upstairs meeting room. At around 2012 the president called the meeting to order and called for apologies. These there were for Bill Burke, Jim Callaway Wilf Hilder, Bill Capon and George and Helen Gray.

New members called for welcome were Nuri Chorvat, Paul Veltman and Chris Miller. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and received. The only matter arising was a motion from the floor that the committee begin planning for celebration of the club's 70th. anniversary. This was passed without dissent.

Correspondence brought a letter from Australia Post advising the our Post Office box arrangements are being changed due to refurbishing works at the GPO building. We also received a letter from the club's honorary auditor assuring us that our annual accounts were in order. Kirribilli Neighbourhood centre wrote to us advising that organisations renting their premises are required to have Public Liability insurance. We were able to respond to that one in the affirmative and also sent letters of advice to our new members.

General business saw a curious motion to bring on general business. Come to think of it this meeting was characterised by curiouiser and curiouiser motions. There was a motion to rescind the club's decision to oppose the listing of the Mount Hay area as wilderness. No doubt much will have been said and published about this issue by the time you read this. An amendment was carried to lay the matter on the table, present information for all points of view through the magazine, and determine the motion at the June General Meeting. There was also a motion to instruct the editor to publish something or other, but this lapsed before anyone managed to explain the concept of an editor to the various people who debated the matter. The usual motions were passed to permit the election of officer bearers to proceed concurrently with the business of the meeting and setting down the method of counting.

The annual reports were taken as read and received with some questioning of the membership secretary's report. It seems there were some numbers missing for the current year. (These will be published in a coming magazine article, or perhaps you will have to buy the book. Watch these spaces!)

The walks reports began at the weekend of 17, 18 February with Bill Holland hosting 18 prospectives on a training weekend at Coolana. He also had 5 members along to assist with instruction and guidance. Anne Maguire had 16 on her Kanuka Brook trip on the Saturday. Jim Callaway reported 11 enjoying a spot of swimming along the way on his Waterfall to Heathcote walk on the Sunday. Sandy Johnson had 5 on his Palm Beach to Mackerel Beach circular walk, which he described as delightful. John Hogan's bicycle trip from Parramatta to Botany Bay also attracted 3 starters on the Sunday.

Maurice Smith reported a party of 7 on his easy summer walk along the Clyde and Holland Rivers over the weekend of 24, 24 February. Whether they brought gourmet food or were just considered so by the leeches they met we do not know. David Rostron had some 5 starters on his part exploratory swimming and rock scrambling trip on the Shoalhaven River from a Friday night start. Kenn Clacher's two day abseiling trip in the Wollongambe attracted parties of 6 and 8 for the Saturday and Sunday respectively. There was no report for Wilf's Stage 6 of the circumnavigation of Port Jackson on the Sunday. Similarly there were no details for Geoff Dowsett's Otford to Bundeena walk. Morrie Ward's compulsory wet feet trip in the creeks off Bells Line of road had 12 starters that day.

The weekend of 1, 2, 3 March saw Geoff McIntosh cancel his election weekend trip out from Kanangra Walls to the Kowmung. Alan Donnelley deferred his Cedar Creek trip from the previous weekend and ended up with a party of 4 or 5 enjoying the scrub and a longer than expected walk. Eddie Giacomel's Saturday sortie to the Colo River had 6 starters on what was described as a good long day. Of the Sunday walks Ken Smith led a party of 18 on his walk out from Glenbrook via Kanuka Brook and Don Brooks called a halt to additions on the Friday evening when the number of intending starters topped 34 for his stage one of The Great North Walk. He put the numbers to good use in the event by arranging a clean up of the area under one of the bridges.

March 8, 9, 10 saw a curious repetition of reporting with Maurice Smith's trip in the Ettrema creek area being reported as 7 with leeches, much the same as the report for this trip over 17, 18 February. Either history repeated itself or our reporters did. There were two Saturday walks that weekend. Zoi Bodlay and Pamela Leuzinger forced the party of 14 on their Magic Swimming Hole trip to endure a 3 hour lunch. ▷

◁ Morag Ryder's walk around Narrow Neck had no details other than wet. Of the two Sunday walks there was no report for Peter Kaye's Upper Grose walk and Greta James reported soggy conditions for the 6 starters on her walk up Kanuka Brook. The treasurer's report indicated that we spent \$950 and closed the month with a balance of \$2,842. The report gave rise to a motion that in future surplus monies from the Coolana fund be separately declared in reports and reinvested to the benefit of Coolana. This was passed after some debate. Conservation report indicated that the NSW government are about to approve 8 wilderness areas. There was also mention of a paper by Ian Brown of NPWS Blue Mountains regarding damage to parks by use of tracks and suggesting the need to devise rules to control the commercial users of parks. Confederation report brought news that the Grose Wilderness submission has been put forward. General business brought the two motions on notice, restricting the use of funds of the organisation and controlling the disposal of funds in the event the organisation is wound up. Each of these were explained and passed. The announcements included a note that the third weekend of each month will be a weeding bee at Coolana. The meeting closed at 2222. □

FOR SALE

Macpac "Eclipse" 2 Person Tent. Recently fitted with new floor by Macpac. Remainder of tent in good condition. Price \$120.00

Contact G. Floyd, Telephone 9929 4170 □

FOR SALE

SCARPA "Lady Trek" Walking Boots. Italian Leather, Size 37. Tread as new. \$150.00

TRANGIA Stove Metho / Gas No 27-1.
2 Saucepans, frypan etc. As new. \$50.00
SUUNTO Compass KB20/360R. Swing dial type, fully encased, side eyepiece with sighting line. Accuracy to 1°. \$70.00

Enquiries: Maurice Smith. Tel 587 6325. □

Editorial

About the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs

Most members will be aware of the recent application by Confederation for most of the Grose River Catchment to be declared a wilderness area. As there may be some recent Club members who do not know the history of Confederation perhaps now is an opportune time to bring everyone up to date. The following material, reprinted from the March '96 edition of "The Bush Walker" (Confederations newsletter) will show how Confederation came into existence.

Note: A copy of the 1932 invitation document referred to was supplied but is not reprinted here due to space considerations.

Also, as the Confederation Newsletter is not posted to members anymore, (copies are usually available to members who visit the Kiribilly Clubrooms) from the same newsletter we reprint an article dealing with the Grose Wilderness proposal. Ed.

The Birth of Confederation

Shown here is a historic 1932 invitation to a bushwalking club, from Harold Chardon of the Sydney Bush Walkers, to attend the inaugural meeting of the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs. The document has been kindly provided to us by Greg Powell, and it will be added to all the other archival material on Confederation held in the Mitchell Library.

Of course, the inaugural meeting went ahead. On 8 September 1932, the newly appointed secretary wrote to the Sunday Sun news paper as follows:

The New South Wales Federation of Bush Walking Clubs has been founded by the bush walking Clubs of Sydney and the State generally, with a view to the protection and promotion of mutual aims and interests, to protect flora and fauna, to provide a clearing house for information as to the various routes and centres of interest and scenic beauty, to protect and develop recognised walking areas, and, most important of all, to keep our bush scenery in their naturally lovely condition. Some such action as this was forecast some time ago by the movement that, aided by some valued personal generosity, eventually resulted in the purchase of the Blue Gum

Forest, this region now being saved to perpetuity as a walkers, and campers paradise.

With the Metropolis increasing as each year goes by, and the surrounding areas becoming more thickly populated, it is not hard to visualise the time when bush walking, as we know it today, will be attended by far more difficulty and considerably less enjoyment.

With this possibility in view the Federation has under consideration, a proposal made by the Mountain Trails Club that representation be made to the Minister for Lands suggesting that an area of land be resumed adjacent to the Lilyvale Railway Station, admittedly the Clara Junction of Hikedom.

The Federation is also alive to the fact that the beauty spots of National Park are being littered with all sorts of unsightly and insanitary rubbish left lying about, by careless people. A certain amount of vandalism is also going on.

Clubs already affiliated are:-

- The Mountain Trails Club of N.S.W.
- The Sydney Bush Walkers
- The Hikers Club of Sydney
- The N.S.W. Amateur Walking Club
- The Bushlanders Club of N.S.W.
- The Workers Educational Association
- The Ramblers Club
- Y.W.C.A. Ramblers Club
- The Bush Tracks Club (Wagga)

*The honorary Secretary at Box 1251HH, G.P.O., would be very pleased to hear from any clubs wishing to affiliate and would much appreciate this fact being made known.
With best wished [etc]*

Of the above foundation clubs, the Sydney Bush Walkers, the Workers Educational Association (in the form of the W.E.A. Ramblers and Naturalists) and the Ramblers are still with us.

The 'valued personal generosity' which allowed the purchase of Blue Gum Forest came from Mr W.J. (Jim) Cleary, who at the time was the Commissioner for NSW Railways and an avid freelance bushwalker. At the height of the Depression, while supporting his wife, five daughters and an unemployed brother, Cleary made an anonymous interest-free loan of \$10,000 (in today's values) to the Blue Gum Forest committee.

Cleary was soon afterwards sacked as Railways Commissioner, due to his clashes with Premier Lang. He then became long-standing chairman of the ABC, and has been referred to as the Father of the ABC, though he fell into relative obscurity and poverty after his sacking in 1945.

Given that the reservation of Blue Gum Forest was not only the catalyst for creation of Confederation, but also represents the genesis of the Blue Mountains National Park, we are all much indebted to Cleary - and to all the prominent bushwalking activists of the time, such as Myles Dunphy, Dorothy Lawry, Joe Turner, Roy Bennett, Alan Rigby, Marie Byles and many others

Andy McQueen.

Nomination of the Grose River Catchment

Confederation has recently made a nomination under the Wilderness Act of approximately 55,000 hectares of the Blue Mountains National Park as The Grose Wilderness. As an area of great historical significance to bush walkers and conservationists it is fitting that Confederation of NSW Bushwalkers makes the nomination of this magnificent system of gorges and plateaus for optimum protection as a wilderness area.

In introducing bushwalkers to this nomination we need to emphasise that the heavily visited and well tracked area centred on the Blue Gum Forest that people immediately associate with the Grose is only a small part of the total area of the gorge. Downstream of the Govett's Creek junction is another forty kilometres of rugged gorge along the Grose and over one hundred kilometres of wild tributary streams often with extensive gorges of their own. The environment movement is already actively seeking State and Federal Government support for the national parks of the Greater Blue Mountains (including Wollemi, Blue Mtns, Kanangra and Nattai) to be listed as a World Heritage Area. By having areas of declared wilderness within the World Heritage Area we can be certain that management of those areas as wild places could not be compromised by the pressure of greater visitation. This is evident in some WHA parks where visitation increases have

led to the spread of facilities and roads into pristine areas.

This article sets out to put our nomination in perspective through references to the NSW Wilderness Act and comparisons of this area with other NSW wilderness areas already identified, declared or being assessed under the act. A few myths will hopefully be exploded along the way.

WHAT AREA ARE WE NOMINATING ?

The nomination is for most of the national park lands in the Grose catchment. The nomination excludes substantial human built features incompatible with wilderness, namely: the public roads - Hat Hill Rd, Victoria Falls Lookout Rd and the Bell to Mt Tomah stretch of the Bell Rd; sections of the main grid powerlines between Lawson and Katoomba; the walking tracks into the valley from Perry's Lookdown, Govett's Leap and Evan's Lookout and the Acacia Flat camping ground. The other main walking tracks to Blue Gum Forest and the forest itself would be within the wilderness area but there would be *no* constraints on the continued existence and use of these walking routes if declared wilderness. Blue Gum Forest would become the gateway to the Grose Wilderness for people entering via the major walking tracks.

HOW IS WILDERNESS DEFINED AND MANAGED?

New South Wales has had a Wilderness Act since 1987, which lists the following criteria for wilderness identification:

- a) that the area together with its plant and animal communities has not been substantially modified by humans and their works OR is capable of being restored to such a state;
- b) the area is of sufficient size to maintain its natural systems; and
- c) the area is capable of providing opportunities for solitude and self reliant recreation.

The act allows members of the public or community groups to nominate areas for the National Parks and Wildlife Service to assess. Once the nomination is made, the NPWS has two years to complete its assess

ment. Land identified as wilderness by the NPWS can then be declared under the Act by the Minister for the Environment.

Management of declared wilderness areas is required to restore, protect and maintain the area in a natural state, minimise disturbance to wildlife, allow areas to evolve with minimum interference and permit opportunities for compatible activities like bushwalking, nature study, photography and self reliant camping.

IS THIS AREA LARGE ENOUGH TO BE A WILDERNESS?

There are twenty four declared and several unprotected wilderness areas in NSW. At 55 000 hectares the Grose Wilderness would be larger than 50 percent of those areas which range in size from areas like Levers Plateau (15442 ha), Bogong Peaks (27494 ha) and Nattai (30424 ha) to our largest areas like Kanangra-Boyd (130000 ha), Macleay Gorges (165392 ha) and Wollemi (433530 ha). In terms of meeting **b)** in the above criteria there is certainly a large enough area to maintain its natural systems. Furthermore there is a natural link through national parkland to the north with the massive Wollemi Wilderness Area, the areas being separated in places only by a two lane road and adjacent powerlines.

IS IT TOO DEGRADED TO BE WILDERNESS ?

As a result of urban development in part of the upper catchment the area contains some weed infestations, however these are confined to areas along the major rivers and streams downstream of intense urban development. Groups such as Friends of Blue Gum Forest and members of Confederation in conjunction with NPWS have been actively controlling weeds such as Gorse and Broom. Wilderness management places high priority on eradication programs for weeds and feral animals. The water quality problems mainly arise from Blue Mountains sewerage and urban runoff entering the catchment. An upgrading of the Blue Mountains sewerage system is presently underway. If stormwater basins are also installed at the edge of bushland to clean up urban runoff

both the water quality and weed situations should vastly improve in the valley. Similar problems (poor water quality and/or introduced species) affect other wilderness areas - Nattai, Kanangra, Guy Fawkes, Ettrema, Macleay Gorges and Barrington being a few examples. In summary wilderness can still be declared over areas with these problems since degradation in existence is reversible.

PAST AND PRESENT HUMAN ACTIVITIES

As mentioned the nomination does not include the area of highest visitation incorporating the formal camping area at Acacia Flat and part of Govett's Gorge bounded by the Perry's Lookdown and Rodriguez Pass tracks plus the public roads to Perry's Lookdown and Victoria Falls. Their management can then continue to cater for the large number of visitors received and the tracks and other facilities maintained or upgraded. Walking tracks in the wilderness eg Pierces Pass would certainly remain as natural trails due to continuing use by walkers. Foot tracks formed along popular routes may occur in wilderness areas, the Budawang area being an obvious example. The idea is not to construct or mark any new tracks in wilderness areas. Other remnants of human activity include the Engineers bridle track from 1858, sections of which can still be found and walked and some small remains of mining venture for shale and coal between the 1870's and 1950's.

ROAD CLOSURES

The most significant recent human impact was the construction of many kilometres of fire trails along most ridge tops surrounding the valley in the 1960's. These trails now range in condition from impassable and overgrown to officially closed excepting management vehicles to freely open for public use. They have on the whole become redundant for fire fighting purposes with the use of aircraft now preferred as both more effective and of less risk to firefighters. After some consulting with member clubs Confederation has chosen to take a consistent approach for all of these vehicular trails within the wilderness boundary in supporting their closure and rehabilitation with parking facilities relocated where required. Our view is that the roads should be revegetated with future access along these ridges on foot only. The road closures affecting popular

walking areas with lengths of closure (ie extra walking required) are as follows: Faulconbridge Point Rd - 6km to the Grose River Walking Track or 7 km to the lookout; the Mount Hay Rd - 5 km out to the Lockleys Pylon track head or 9.5 km to the Mt Hay track; Burramoko Ridge Rd - 4.5 km to Baltzer Lookout; Pierces Pass Rd - 800 metres only with parking and picnic facilities relocated; Mt banks Rd - 1 km, also with relocated facilities. Some trails in the Patterson Range area would also require closure.

YOUR SUPPORT

There were probably a few collective winces as some of you read those extra walking distances. Possibly not as loud as was heard in the 1930's when walkers learned of the imminent clearing of Blue Gum Forest and sprung into action to save it from the axe. Nor in the following decades as the wild ridges were tamed with fire roads and proposals flagged for roads into the valley. Confederation was formed as a result of the efforts to secure the future of Blue Gum and the surrounding valley. This area could rightfully be called the birthplace of conservation in Australia. In supporting the wilderness proposal, road closures and all, walkers can show that our conservation ethic is as strong as ever and not necessarily provisional on our recreational interests being served. Wilderness statistics compiled from the Wilderness Red Index published by The Colong Foundation For Wilderness. □

RAIN

It rained and rained and rained
The average fall was well maintained
And when the tracks were simply bogs
It started raining cats and dogs
After a drought of half an hour
We had a most refreshing shower
And then most curious thing of all
A gentle rain began to fall
Next day but one was fairly dry
Save for one deluge from the sky
Which wetted the party to the skin
And then at last the rain set in
Anonymous

submitted by *Peter Rossel*